



CHRIST CHURCH

12:00 P. M.

Vero Beach

667 20th Street

Vero Beach, Florida 32960

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Meditations on the Seven

Last Words

Good Friday

April 10, 2020

Last Words - Revealing the Heart of the Savior!

Last words are often very telling. If you knew that you would soon be dead what would you most want to say?

These seven sayings of Christ from the Cross, that we will reflect on together, are not really His last words - you see we know that He rose again three days later, spent 40 days after His resurrection preparing the Apostles and others for their mission and we know that He will come again. However, these words are important as they show us the heart of Christ as He willingly gives His life up on the Cross. Listen with me to the heart of our Savior!

1. Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

A. The Prayer for Forgiveness - In the midst of an unjust, unimaginably cruel and painful execution the heart of Christ is on the eternal destiny of his persecutors. As they torment Him - He prays for them! Bishop J. C. Ryle said “We have probably not the least idea how many conversions to God

at Jerusalem which took place during the first six months after the crucifixion, were the direct reply to this marvelous prayer.”

When we think about the executioners we must remember that they were acting on our behalf. You see it was my sin, your sin, which nailed Jesus to the Cross. In His prayer of forgiveness, he not only thought about those physically present, but also those whom they represented - Hear the heart of the Savior as He prays for you, “Father forgive _____ he/she does not know what he/she is doing.”

B. The Price of Forgiveness - The prayer of forgiveness is all the more amazing as it takes place as Christ is paying the price of forgiveness. He was acting as our sacrifice, our atonement, on the Cross. God is holy and cannot allow sin to go unpunished. Thus, Christ is taking our guilt and our punishment upon Himself. As He pays the price for our sin - He prays for the forgiveness of our sin!

“The Bible says, ‘God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us’ (Romans 5:8). This is not only the heart of God - it is the heart of Christianity.”

Song

Father, we have sinned in word, and deed, and thought;
through ignorance, through weakness, through deliberate fault.
We've sinned against our neighbors and against You, Lord.
Yet we are truly sorry, and we turn to You once more.

Father of the nations, You who bless the poor-
we're servants of the endless, want and drive for more.
We've made our greed a virtue, while the children starve;
come change our joy to sorrow, till our lives reflect Your heart.

song by Keith Getty/Stuart Townend
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2. Luke 23:43 “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

A. Plea of a Rebel - the thief on the cross next to Jesus does not claim innocence - he cries out for mercy. He knows that he is guilty! This is the first step for each of us. We must recognize that we are rebels against God. “That rebellion includes everything you might think of as sin - like lying, stealing, adultery and hypocrisy - and a few things you might not think of - like impatience, greed, pride, unforgiveness and prayerlessness.”

It is not easy for us to own up to the reality that we are rebels - sinners - we are guilty. We like to make ourselves feel better by saying that we are not as bad as _____. However, before we can know the joy of forgiveness we must know the pain of guilt. It is only as we understand our rebellion that we can rejoice in our redemption.

B. Promise of Redemption - TODAY you will be with me in Paradise!

- i. Personal request - remember me.
- ii. Personal relationship - you will be with me.
- iii. Permanent Residence - Paradise!

Air

Paradise

Greg Flesch/Steve Hindalong

3. John 19:26-27 “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, Woman, behold your son!”

A. Mary's love of Jesus - Mary had endured much being the mother of Christ. It began with her pregnancy - while still a virgin - she conceived of the Holy Spirit, God the Son. She watched him as He grew physically and as he took on his mission. She watched him leave home and travel the country declaring the Kingdom. She endured the ridicule of those in

town who said, “he claims to be Messiah, but we know that he is only the son of a carpenter.” Finally, she had to watch him die!

- B. Jesus’ love for Mary** - in the moment of His greatest agony Jesus shows His love for Mary - He entrusts her to the care of one of His disciples - most think the disciple was John, but the Bible does not say with certainty.

In this act Jesus shows us the priority of family/community. Until He comes again Jesus has given us both a biological and spiritual family - working together the Church and the family help us to grow into men and women of God. Tonight Jesus is saying to you look around this is your family until I come again for you!

“Beneath, lo! Mary weeping stands, in tears most pitifully fair, and beats the breast, where Christ had hung, and tears her long disheveled hair - where can I lay my mournful head? My son, my king, my God is dead!” (*Ode on the Passion* by Thomas Warton the Elder)

Hymn 159

1. At the cross her vigil keeping,
stood the mournful mother weeping,
where he hung, the dying Lord:

there she waited in her anguish,
seeing Christ in torment languish,
in her heart the piercing sword.

2. With what pain and desolation,
with what grief and resignation,
Mary watched her dying son.
Deep the woe of her affliction,
when she saw the crucifixion
of the sole-begotten one.
3. Him she saw for our salvation
mocked with cruel acclamation,
scourged, and crowned with thorns entwined;
saw him then from judgment taken,
and in death by all forsaken,
till his spirit he resigned.
4. Who, on Christ’s dear mother gazing,
pierced by anguish so amazing,
born of woman, would not weep?
Who, on Christ’s dear mother thinking,
such a cup of sorrow drinking,
would not share her sorrows deep?

5. Jesus, may her deep devotion
stir in me the same emotion,
Fount of love, Redeemer kind;
that my heart fresh ardor gaining,
and a purer love attaining,
may with thee acceptance find.

words: Latin, 13th cent.; ver. *Hymnal* 1982
music: *Stabat Mater dolorosa*, melody from *Maintzich Gegangbuch*, 1661

4. John 19:28 “I thirst.”

A. Physical Thirst Described - Have you ever been thirsty - I mean really thirsty? We all can remember a time when we needed water! It is human to thirst - you can live quite some time without food, but you will die quickly without water. Philip Ryken rightly says, “If secular people tend to doubt that Jesus is really God, Christians tend to forget that he really became a man.” Jesus was being poured out in death. He had a real thirst! His body was losing all fluid and he was dying. In the Old Testament we read where this was foretold. Psalm 22:14-15 King David says of the Savior “*I am poured out like water...my strength is dried up like a potsberd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.*”

B. Spiritual Thirst Satisfied - Jesus endured physical thirst in order to satisfy our spiritual thirst. Matthew Henry, the Puritan, wrote “The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst, in the compliant of the rich man who begged

for a drop of water to cool his tongue. To that everlasting thirst we had all been condemned, if Christ had not suffered on the cross.” Are you thirsty - come to the Cross!

I heard the voice of Jesus say, “Behold I freely give The living water; thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live.”

I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream; My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

- Horatius Bonar

Song

Be still; there is a healer.
His love is deeper than the sea.
His mercy is unfailing,
His arms a fortress for the weak.
Let faith arise, let faith arise.

*Refrain: I lift my hands to believe again.
You are my refuge. You are my strength.
As I pour out my heart these things I remember;
You are faithful God, forever.*

Be still; there is a river
that flows from Calvary's tree.
A fountain for the thirsty,
Your grace that washes over me.
Let faith arise, let faith arise. (*refrain*)

Let faith arise, let faith arise.

Open my eyes, open my eyes. (*repeat, then refrain*)

song by Chris Tomlin/Louie Giglio/Matt Maher

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5. Mark 15:34; Matthew 17:46 “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, *Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsake me?”

A. Forsaken Son - the most acute pain of the Cross was the broken fellowship between Christ and the Father. Jesus cried out in anguish as he felt the growing darkness and loneliness of death descending upon him. This is the only time that Jesus addresses his Father as God and not Father. There is no answer to His cry! God did not take Him off of the Cross, angels did not descend to attend to him, he hung there alone!

B. Forsaken Sin - Jesus was bearing our sin on the Cross, that is why He was forsaken. He hung there alone for me, for you, so that we would not ever be alone - that we would be safe in the hands of God. Because Jesus dies this lonely death we receive the promise “I will never leave your or forsake you!”

Air

Jesus walked this lonesome valley

Folk Hymn

6. John 19:30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” ...

A. Fulfilled His Mission - Jesus was not giving up or giving in when he said it is finished. He was declaring the victory over sin, death and hell. The phrase it is finished is only one Greek word (*teleo*) - meaning paid in full. This was the word stamped on the bill of sale by Greek merchants to show that the sale was complete. Christ was saying - I have purchased you - your debt is paid in full! Note that we come with the debt we cannot pay and He gives us a love we cannot comprehend. Has Christ stamped your life with the word - FINISHED - PAID IN FULL?

B. Future Hope - Christ has not only paid for our sin, He is preparing our souls for an eternity with Him. The Cross is a reality and the Second Coming is a certainty. Christ ransomed us and He will return for us. Martin Luther said there were only two days on his calendar TODAY and THAT DAY! Luther's stated goal was to live everyday in light of the certainty of “that day” the day our Savior will return for us. If today were “that day” would you be satisfied with what you have done with the life Christ purchased for you on the Cross? Are you living each day in light of the price Christ paid to give this gift of life to you?

Song

O, to see the dawn of the darkest day;
Christ on the road to Calvary.
Tried by sinful men, torn and beaten then,
Nailed to a cross of wood.

*Refrain: This the pow'r of the cross:
Christ became sin for us;
Took the blame, bore the wrath,
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

O, to see the pain written on Your face,
bearing the awesome weight of sin.
Ev'ry bitter thought ev'ry evil deed
crowning Your bloodstained brow. *(refrain)*

Now the daylight flees; now the ground beneath
quakes as its Maker bows His head.
Curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life;
“Finished” the vict'ry cry. *(refrain)*

O, to see my name written in the wounds,
for through Your suff'ring I am free.
Death is crushed to death; life is mine to live,
won through Your selfless love.

*This the pow'r of the cross:
Son of God, slain for us.
What a love! What a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

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7. Luke 23:46 “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said ‘Father into Your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this He breathed His last.”

A. Dying Words - Palm 31:5 “Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.”

These words remind us that death is not an end, but rather a beginning. The end of Jesus’ earthly life was not the end of life. The end of your earthly life will not be the end of your life either. This is why St. Paul could say to live is Christ and to die is gain. Death is gain because it is the culmination of Redemption. At death we enter into the promises of redemption - life with Christ!

B. Dying Well - Many saints throughout history have died with these same words, or some similar words, on their lips. Stephen the first martyr of the Church as he was being stoned to death said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” (Acts 7:59)

John Hus was condemned by the Council of Constance in 1415, and was burned at the stake for his faith said, “I commit my spirit into thy hands, Lord Jesus Christ; unto thee I commend my spirit, which thou has redeemed.”

If tonight were your last night in this life do you know where you would spend eternal life? Christ died on the Cross so that you could have an abundant life now as well as enjoy eternal life with HIM.

Hymn 172

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
2. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
3. Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
4. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

words: Afro-American spiritual
music: *Were You There*, Afro-American spiritual; harm. Charles Winfield Douglas (1867-1944)

